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ABSTRACT

The efforts to reform the U.S. educational system should focus on the goal of creating a Learning Society. A Learning Society is based upon the commitment to a set of values and to a system of education that affords all members of the community the opportunity to stretch their minds to full capacity from early childhood through adulthood. This paper describes what a Learning Society is and the steps to be taken in its creation. Members of a Learning Society develop certain awarenesses that are important to their effective participation in democratic decision-making processes. These awarenesses included value awareness, social reality awareness, problem awareness, community awareness, and system awareness, among others. The current efforts being undertaken to build a Learning Society in Elkhart, Indiana, and the commitment to lifelong learning that some European countries have made are discussed. Ten charts included as appendices illustrate fundamental ideas in various disciplines including career development, economics, political science, sociology, cultural anthropology, social psychology, and the search for justice. One chart is a diagram of the Learning Society as a cybernetic learning system and another shows the interaction between the social and ecological system. (DB)

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REFORMING SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

by

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A Lecture Presented
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REFORMING EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

I start my presentation with these words from a recent report on the status of education in the United States. I quote:

"Our nation is at risk. Our once unchallenged preeminence in commerce, industry, science, and technological innovation is being overtaken by competitors throughout the world ... The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a nation and as a people. What was unimaginable a generation ago has begun to occur ... Others are matching and surpassing our educational attainments.

"If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war."

These incendiary words are drawn from the opening paragraphs of *A Nation at Risk*, a report prepared by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. This document, together with three other documents* published in 1983, were intended to provoke a strong response, and this they did.

A heated national debate about the perilous conditions of America's schools started in 1983, a debate that quickly spread from the editorial pages of daily newspapers to state legislatures, and to the President and his Cabinet. What is most surprising, however, is that *A Nation at Risk*, unlike most government reports, actually did stimulate many changes in school policy, changes which are not likely to improve the quality of education.

Since 1984, 41 states have stiffened graduation requirements, 37 states have introduced new, stricter student evaluations and testing programs, and 20 states have increased the amount of required instruction time by lengthening the school day or year or both—at a time when our schools are already overloaded with duties, many of which

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* Education Commission for the United States. *Action for Excellence.* Denver, Colorado, June 1983, 50pp.
National Science Board, Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science, and Technology. *Educating Americans for the 21st Century.* Washington, D.C., 1983, 124pp.
Twentieth Century Fund. Task Force on Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Policy. *Making the Grade.* New York, 1983, 174pp.

should not be their responsibility. Public schools in the United States are expected to Americanize, solve racial problems, and also tackle problems that society itself has difficulty in solving, such as the problem of the separation of church and state. Schools are expected to inculcate values that society itself does not always observe, such as "All men are created equal."

Although all the critical reports urged improvements, little or no substantial change has actually taken place. The present U.S. Secretary of Education has raised doubts about whether American schools are as bad as the reports argue. The U.S. Department of Education budget has been heavily cut by the Reagan Administration. Many states—suffering with their own budget problems—have not been able to translate the recommendations into action. In Texas, for example, many of the measures passed in 1984 have been in jeopardy because the state has a huge budget deficit due to declining oil revenues.

Many generations of Americans have dreamed about living in freedom, reaping the benefits of a growing, competitive economy, and participating in the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy. But as we stand on the threshold of the 21st century, their dreams are in jeopardy. Why?

1. U.S. schools are neglecting disadvantaged youth. In 1987 nearly one million young people will leave the nation's public schools without graduating. Most of them will be deficient in basic skills, marginally illiterate, and virtually unemployable. Another 700,000 will merely mark time in school and will receive diplomas, but they will be as deficient in meaningful skill and work habits as the dropouts. Most of these children are classified as educationally disadvantaged. They may suffer from undiagnosed or untreated handicaps. They may be pregnant teens and their offspring. They may be students with language problems. They may be victims of race and ethnic tragedies. They may be children with parents who are indifferent to education. They may be students who are forced to attend substandard schools, which deprive them of intellectual and social growth.

2. A second reason for the declining quality of U.S. education is adolescent employment, which interferes with the intellectual and social development of youth. In the U.S. in 1983, 63% of high school seniors and 42% of sophomores were working during the school year. The average part-time job consists of 16 to 20 hours a week, but one in ten senior students works more than 30 hours a week. Most

students who work do not do so because of economic need. In fact, youth from the lowest income families are the least successful in gaining school year employment.

Part-time work of adolescents stimulates consumerism and enhances immediate gratification. It also increases alcohol and drug use and deprives students of extracurricular activities that are important to their health and social development. Paid work frequently replaces volunteer services, which teach skills and heighten awareness of the plight of others.

3. The third reason for the declining quality of education is that the bulk of appropriations and private grants to schools—federal, state, and local—goes to secondary education, on the assumption that channeling aid to secondary schools increases the quality of education. With most of the financial aid going to secondary schools, only 75% of Americans graduate from high school, whereas in other developed countries 90% graduate from high school or its equivalent. The reason for the low return in the United States is that high school grades measure not only what was learned in high schools but what was *not* learned in the elementary schools. And since aid to elementary schools is neglected, many students go to high school without adequate preparation.

4. The fourth reason for the decline in the quality of education is that vocational education is often obsolete. Unlike in the past, when the country's industrial growth created a substantial demand for vocational education and graduates with special occupational skills, today the growth of the service sector and the development of new technologies are becoming the driving forces behind education and employment policies. As a result, acquiring strong, basic academic skills will be imperative, since for many, job skill requirements will change rapidly, necessitating frequent retraining and upgrading.

5. The current mode of schooling tends to isolate students from their community. Students are expected to learn about the community in isolation from it rather than by participating in it. If a dull school is competing with an exciting world outside, it is doubtful that the learning a child acquires in school will leave much of an impression.

6. The link between knowledge and virtue has been weakened. When Socrates declared that knowledge is virtue and virtue is knowledge, he postulated a link between intellectual and ethical growth that guided education for more than two

thousand years. Today, the link between knowledge and virtue in the classroom is neglected. This neglect in the education of youth has serious consequences when those youth enter adulthood. With increasing frequency we read of scientists who, to enhance their reputation, tamper with experimental data. The current Iran–Contra affair points to a far–reaching confusion of ends and means at the highest level of the U.S. government. The separation of knowledge and ethics has showed up dramatically in recent months in the financial markets. The 24 August 1987 issue of the *New York Times* published a long article entitled "The Strange Agony of Success." The writer described thousands of young people, particularly those on Wall Street, in corporate law, and in the entrepreneurial world, who are single–mindedly committed to earning the first million dollars as soon as possible and who betray their country's deepest values—a love for family life, honesty, and a commitment to public virtue—as they pursue wealth.

7. There is no progression in social science concepts from grade to grade. Many curriculum builders in the United States lack horizon vision and neglect continuity of concept formation from K to 12. They are preoccupied with identifying minimum concepts for citizenship. No other academic discipline is concerned with identifying minimum concepts.

8. The last reason for the decline in the quality of education is that students in public schools lack goal orientation. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Technology asked hundreds of students why they are going to school. The most frequent response was: "I *have* to be there." Others were: "I have a better chance for a good job," or "I need this in order to go to college," or "This is where I meet my friends." Not once did the students mention the meaning of "this," or how education helps them to think critically. In general, the Carnegie Foundation found among students a feeling of passivity and not one of engagement, a sense that they don't fit, that they have little thought about becoming responsible adults. The schools have become passive institutions and are viewed by most students as adult places where rules are enforced. If 40 million students see their schools as places of learning that somehow do not touch what they worry about every day, the prospects of making school a vital place are dismal. Student apathy may be attributed largely to the loss of the support system of home, business, government, and civic organizations.

Ladies and Gentlemen: In a world of ever-accelerating competition and dramatic change of workplace, in a world where misuse of knowledge takes us ever nearer to global destruction, in a time when there is an ever-larger opportunity for the use of knowledge for human betterment—in this time, educational reform should focus on the goal of creating a Learning Society.

At the heart of such a society is the commitment to a set of values and to a system of education that affords all members of the community the opportunity to stretch their minds to full capacity from early childhood through adulthood. In such a society, education is important not only because of what it contributes to one's career but also because of the value it adds to the general quality of individuals' lives, as well as to society at large.

One hundred and thirty-three years ago, James de Bow, a self-educated American scholar, described the goals of a Learning Society. He said:

> "Let us diffuse knowledge throughout the length and breadth of this great country; multiply the means of information – send the schoolmaster into every hovel – dot every hill with the school house and college – let the Press without intermission night and day pour forth its steady streams of light – foster science and the arts – let the civilizing and Godlike influence of machinery uninterruptedly extend. Then will the future of our country, boundless and great, beyond all example, beyond all compare and countless ages, bless its mission and acknowledge its glorious dominion."

A comprehensive educational experience is the foundation of a true Learning Society, and only this environment can make possible the total growth of human beings. This total growth ensures not only training for vocational competence but also development of the psychological, aesthetic, moral, and philosophical qualities that contribute so much to the quality of life. With such a total educational environment, the key values that have energized and enlightened our society since its founding—truthfulness, compassion, equality, justice, freedom—will take on new vigor and will help us to move through this era of turmoil.

The founder who symbolizes nonformal education in the United States is Benjamin Franklin. Self-educated, he nevertheless fully recognized the need for institutional supports for learners. His informal group of 12 members, the Junto, met continually for 30 years to discuss ideas and initiate social improvements. From their deliberations came a number of other organizations of nonformal education: a subscription library, the American Philosophical Society, and an Academy for young boys.

What are those qualities that a community must develop to become a Learning Society? Certain basic conditions are helpful, of course. These include a sound economic base, safety, and the provision of health and other public services, which occupy much of the attention of public officials today. These conditions are helpful, but they do not guarantee a good life. For a good life to exist in the community, the following conditions should be present:

1. An environment that stimulates the development of individual potentialities in the intellectual, emotional, physical, social, aesthetic, and spiritual areas.

2. An environment in which active public life, and a commitment to personal and public responsibilities are nurtured.

3. Private and public institutions made up of homes, schools, business, labor, government, and civic organizations, which are aware of their unique functions and how these functions can contribute to the good life of the Learning Society.

4. An ever–expanding network of communications within and among the six segments of the community: homes, schools, business, labor, government, and civic organizations.

Such an expanded learning environment will make possible the total growth of human beings. Such an environment creates a holistic system of knowledge and helps to make learning the business of the whole society. Such an environment creates new educational networks within and among the six segments of society. These networks should be motivated not by private interest alone but by efforts for the public good.

The members of a Learning Society will develop certain awarenesses necessary in the decision–making process of a democratic society.

1. **Value Awareness.** Values give goals to individuals and society.

   Two dominant values must guide the members of a Learning Society. One value is a commitment to truthfulness. Such a value enables scientific enquiry based on cold knowledge without a trace of deception. The search for truth requires a complementary value commitment to freedom, justice, and integrity.

   The second value is the ethical component. This value enables us to articulate our commitment to the idea that other people matter. The ethical dimension

requires the complementary value commitment to love, kindness, and human charity.

The scientific and ethical components together have one thing in common. Each generates forces that hold the world together. The civilized world of today is threatened with destruction by the physical impact of science on our lives. Truth is necessary in order to discover the true consequences of science and technology. Human compassion, which is part of the ethical component, is necessary to prevent the inhuman consequences of science and technology. The combination of truth and compassion will enable us to use knowledge for human betterment.

In society we encounter value dilemmas all the time. In the primary grades, value commitments can take different forms:

How should I spend my allowance?

What should I do with my free time?

What is a happy family?

What is a good city?

Why do we go to school?

Numerous children's stories offer excellent illustrations of how values can be introduced in the primary grades. A children's story, "The Ditch That Brings Food," describes an Indian tribe who, through self–sacrifice, built a ditch to irrigate their fields. As a group, they received multiple rewards for withholding consumption and using their time and tools on building the irrigation ditch.

2. **Social Reality Awareness.** Social reality awareness helps us to understand that the natural and man–made environments are changing all the time due to natural forces, science and technology, and changes in value preferences. Adult members of society are no longer monopolists of social reality. Our youth in very early years are exposed to the successes and frustrations of society. They experience pollution, unemployment, riots, poverty, drug abuse, alcoholism, juvenile delinquency, floods, hunger, terrorism, and war. There should be intergenerational dialogue about what is happening locally, across the nation, and across the world. Dialogue is lacking at a time when society is threatened by social breakdown in Lebanon, northern Ireland, South Africa, Chile, Nicaragua and El Salvador, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Uganda, the Philippines, and many other parts

of the world. Social breakdown threatens at home. We are afraid to walk on the streets at night. We fear the effects of the drug culture. The notion of active citizenship and public virtue is vanishing. Private interests are in the saddle. Humans are free only when they belong to a living, concerned, and learning community.

3. **Problem Awareness.** A social problem is the gap between the goals of society and the social reality. Members of a Learning Society must know how to analyze problems. Once I asked fifth graders which country had more social problems, a poor country or a rich country. Their answer was a poor country. I responded that they were wrong, since only a rich country can afford to have social problems. Since most of the boys and girls were black and Puerto Rican, I encouraged them to use their imagination to identify what they considered to be a good society and then compare that with the real world, since democracy can survive only if we try to make our dreams come true through political action. After the class I was speaking to the principal of the school when suddenly I saw a delegation from the fifth grade class in the waiting room, wanting to talk to me. I went to them and asked what they had on their minds. They asked me, "Professor, do you know any other professors who care for people?" This experience is deeply engraved in my memory, and I hope I will never forget it.

   I developed the following six steps to be used in studying social problems. Take, for example, the problem of the deterioration of the environment. In studying that particular problem, students should follow these steps:

   - *Step One* is the recognition of the symptoms of the problem, which means the recognition that something is wrong. Some symptoms of environmental deterioration include smoke in the city, oil spills in the sea, acid rain, nuclear fallout, and chemical waste disposal in the rivers or on the land.

   - *Step Two* is the recognition of the aspects of the problem. This refers to the question of why a society should be interested in and recognize the problem. This step also gives students an opportunity to develop multidisciplinary awareness. Pollution is a cost to nature, property, health, beauty, the individual, and the city.

   - *Step Three* is the definition of the problem, which reflects the gap between the goal and the social reality. How can we establish and preserve an environment where health, safety, and beauty prevail?

- *Step Four* is the scope of the problem, which is a statistical measurement. How bad is the situation? At this step, students gather statistics on the degree of air, water, soil, and noise pollution.

- *Step Five* is the recognition of the causes of the problem. Students investigate the hypotheses that contribute to the deterioration of the environment. Man wishes to conquer nature, and technological advancement enables man to toss around incredible amounts of material, to move earth and mountains. Another cause may be investigated in terms of a lack of system vision, which has been aggravated by specialization. Society fails to recognize nature as a sensitive, non–goal–oriented system, which has no built–in mechanism to correct the destruction caused by technology. Another reason could be the narrowing gap between invention and innovation. For instance, it took 112 years from the development of the theory of photography to the invention of the first camera, 65 years to build the electric motor, 12 years to build the first television camera; and it took only six years from the splitting of the atom to the atomic bomb. This narrowing gap between the development of theory and its application has aggravated the deterioration of the environment. The market system is also contributing to the deterioration of the environment, since it is based on property rights. Air and water are not owned privately; they are considered free goods. Consequently, these public goods are abused. Another reason for environmental deterioration is caused by senseless consumption, which leads to the deterioration of the environment. For a long time, consumer choices were considered rational. Thorstein Veblen in *The Theory of the Leisure Class* brought to the public's attention the senselessness of conspicuous consumption.

- *Step Six* is the solution of the problem. Students at this point investigate what individuals, volunteer groups, and government can do to solve the problem. Some individual efforts may be discussed in terms of developing rational standards of consumption. Voluntary effort may be discussed in terms of what a community can do voluntarily to prevent pollution and correct or clean up polluted environments. In discussing government efforts, students may discuss the various legal restrictions, the introduction of user fees, or dispersal of cities as some of the measures government may undertake. Students can also discuss the Preamble of the Environmental

Policy Act of 1969, which states, "The purpose of this bill is to declare a national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; to enrich the understanding of ecological systems and natural resources important to the nation."

4. **Community Awareness.** The American political system is an upside–down pyramid. American communities, large and small, lack information about themselves. The Learning Society can be instrumental in preparing a Community Profile, which can provide a comprehensive picture of the historical–geographical–economic–political–cultural dimensions of the community. The Profile should be prepared by elementary, high school, and college students, with the cooperation of a Citizens Advisory Board. The document will be an important tool for decision making by business, schools, civic organizations, and local government officials. It could serve youth by answering the following questions:

   Should I stay in my home community?

   How has my community changed during my parents' lifetime? My own lifetime?

   What are the reasons for these changes?

   Do these changes increase or decrease my options?

   Is there an occupational niche in my community for me?

   How can I get the necessary training? Must I leave my community to prepare for that niche?

   How can I best use my talents for the benefit of my community? What are my chances in other communities?

   What is the future of my community and other communities in which I might settle?

   What are the costs and benefits of staying or moving away?

5. **Work Awareness.** Members of all ages of the Learning Society should pursue educational programs that expand career opportunities. Unlike their parents,

young people will not be able to count on remaining with the same job or relying on the same skill throughout their adult life. Current reports predict that a worker's technical knowledge and skill level will have to be updated every five years to meet the challenge of an ever-changing technological society.

Lifelong learning will be a fact of life, and it can just as well add to the joy of life. Every community must build an environment for lifelong formal and nonformal learning.

I have constructed Chart 1 (see Appendix) to identify the fundamental ideas of career education for all ages.

6. **System Awareness.** In a time of increasing specialization, there is the danger that young people will develop the tunnel vision of the specialist toward the world. Specialists become so deeply submerged in their own areas of specialization that they do not see how their areas relate to the rest of the world. Later, when students pursue their professions, the situation becomes more serious. A highway engineer may be the best specialist in the world, but he can hasten environmental deterioration and destroy the social fabric of a community. Airplane designers may receive awards for accomplishments in their specialized areas at the cost of much damage to the ecological system. Most specialists—doctors, lawyers, engineers, physicists—are afflicted with narrow vision. To counteract the consequences of specialization, the Learning Society should help to develop system vision. Young people, professionals, and senior citizens should discover that everything relates to everything else. Please refer to Charts 2 and 3 in the Appendix.

7. **Historical Awareness.** Historical awareness helps people to understand that the roots of many contemporary problems can be found in the past. United States history teaches us the ideals of our founding fathers. It also teaches us how, at different points in time, some episodes approach these ideals, while other episodes veer away from them.

8. **Spatial Awareness** helps us understand that the earth's resources, both human and nonhuman, are unevenly distributed. These unevenly distributed resources establish a range within which the community can achieve an optimum structure and size and can determine the characteristics of the human-made environment.

9. **Future Awareness.** Since the beginning of civilization, there has been one thing that has kept individuals and societies alive and has pushed them ahead. This

was hope for the future. In recent years, many of our hopes for the future have eroded because our faith in technology has eroded and our faith in our problem-solving ability has been challenged; as a result, our generation is leaving to our children a world full of problems and challenges. Young people feel that somewhere there is a new world, but adults do not help them to get there. The Learning Society could remedy this gap.

What do we know about the future? We know that the insatiable appetite of the highly developed countries results in depletion of resources and deterioration of the environment. We know that the Third World demands a new economic world order through the Revolution of Rising Entitlement. We know that an increasing proportion of the world's resources is being turned toward devastating weaponry in the belief that armament leads to peace. We know that many young people around the world lack confidence in the future. They observe with bewilderment that the adult generation is not able or willing to cope with problems affecting the future of their nation or the globe. If we want to change future trends, science and technology alone do not help. The only hope for guiding our youth to a better world is to change social values in terms of truthfulness and human compassion.

The themes of future trends and options should be persistently on the agenda of a Learning Society.

10. **Multidisciplinary Awareness.** As a result of increasing specialization, knowledge becomes more and more fragmented. The different branches of knowledge have been captured by specialists without building communication networks between the disciplines and between the specialists in the various branches of knowledge. Society in the U.S. faces a new situation. General welfare cannot be assured by guaranteeing freedom to science and technology. The use of technology should be governed, encouraged, or controlled by national policies which reflect not only scientific but also social and ethical principles. The formulation of such policies depends upon a Learning Society, where the walls between the disciplines can be penetrated by multidisciplinary awareness.

    The working together of the various branches of knowledge will help people regain confidence in the professions.

11. **Knowledge Awareness.** It is important to help members of the Learning Society discover the design that underlies this seemingly chaotic world. With the help

of a grant from the National Science Foundation and another from the Carnegie Corporation, I developed, with a team of social scientists, the fundamental ideas of economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, and social psychology, and I tested the children's ability to relate these fundamental ideas to their real world. I found that the first graders' experiences are potentially so meaningful that the fundamental ideas of the social sciences can be related to their experiences with increasing depth and complexity as they move from grade to grade.

I called this curriculum "the Organic Curriculum" because the intellectual structure of each of the social science disciplines grows like an organism with the growing maturity of the child into adulthood. The Organic Curriculum can be identified as the foundation for lifelong learning.

Charts 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 (see Appendix) present these fundamental ideas. The core idea of each of these disciplines is negotiation.

> In economics, negotiation takes place in the market, between unlimited wants and limited resources.
>
> In political science, negotiation occurs between unlimited demands and the allocation of resources through authority.
>
> In sociology, negotiation takes place among organizations and groups with competing values.
>
> In anthropology, negotiation takes place between tradition and change, through changing science and technology.
>
> In social psychology, negotiation takes place between personalities and the social situation.
>
> In legal justice, negotiation takes place between truth and reasonableness.

Chart 9 (see Appendix) shows a graphic presentation of the Learning Society as a cybernetic system.

How do we go about laying the foundations of a Learning Society? A few months ago, the Mayor of Elkhart, a small industrial city in Indiana, and the Elkhart public

school system invited me to launch a Learning Society in their city. As a first step, we chose project initiators, who are now working to organize an Executive Planning Committee that will represent education, parents, business, government, students, and civic organizations.

The project initiators will invite the Executive Planning Committee to a series of informal discussions on the needs and problems of their community. In the process of this informal dialogue, some people may drop out, while others will be added. The group will slowly solidify, and from it the brains of the system—the Citizens Alliance—will emerge.

The tasks of the Citizens Alliance are:

1. To identify the goals of the Learning Society;
2. To identify ways in which these goals can be achieved through the contributions of the different segments and ages of society;
3. To manage the formal and informal learning environment so as to achieve the goals;
4. To assist in the formation of neighborhood study councils;
5. To identify needed research in adult learning; and
6. To declare that the City is the teacher.

The Citizens Alliance then converts the learning environment from an uncontrolled learning system to a controlled system where urban life will be a civilized life full of exciting challenges in exercising citizenship.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Let us now take a giant step and visit in our imagination Elkhart, Indiana, in the year 2000. What evidence do you find that Elkhart is a Learning Society?

First, you will visit the downtown Information Center, where an intergenerational volunteer group is busy preparing a display on the U.S. federal budget. A small group of community leaders and students is working on the presentation of a panel discussion: *Does the Federal Budget Reflect National Priorities?*

Nearby, in the public library, there is a sign announcing a series of intergenerational dialogues:

On Being a Professional, Morally Speaking

Public Attitudes toward Physicians

Can Free Enterprise Survive Ethical Schizophrenia?

The Study of Ethics Does Not Start in Business Schools

Why Should Engineers Study the Humanities?

Physics and the Military

Next, we visit the conference room of the First National Bank. Here the Citizens Resource Committee, which is responsible for preparing the Community Profile, is holding a planning session. They are evaluating the first draft of *The Economic Dimensions of Elkhart, Indiana.*

In the town hall, a poster announces a town meeting on: *Preparing Youth for the Future.*

A local church is planning a series of eight Sunday School sessions for youth on *Peace, Freedom, Justice, and Beauty.* The church wants to make youth aware of the hunger, squalor, prejudice, arms conflict, and pollution all around them. The Sunday School sessions will emphasize that these conditions are related to the erosion of social values of Peace, Freedom, Justice, and Beauty.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Today, Denmark and Sweden are in the forefront in building Learning Societies through their informal, lifelong educational programs. Among the various forms, the Study Circle has developed into a system that is pervasive, practical, informal, and broadly diverse. The Study Circle could become an appropriate model for the United States, where there is a pressing need to engage large segments of the general public in serious discussion of public policy issues. Democracy cannot long endure without a solid base of informed public opinion. This base has in the United States been so seriously eroded that popular support for new directions in public policy is difficult to achieve.

The Study Circle is a special form for small group study. Any religious group, political party, popular movement—indeed, *any* group of five or more individuals may submit a study plan, list of materials, and names of their leaders to the Organizations for Popular Enlightenment, and request a government grant. The grant will cover 1/3 of the cost; another 1/3 is provided by the local community, and the last 1/3 comes from fees.

Anything that a group of five wishes to study can be the subject of a Study Circle. Any theme or issue that a sponsoring organization or government agency wishes to have discussed by people can be made a Study Circle theme.

An important feature of the Study Circles is that they are sponsored by organizations that have publicly declared ideologies. Some believe that adult education should not be value–neutral but should offer participants an opportunity to develop and express their values.

Olaf Palme, the late Prime Minister of Sweden, characterized his country as "to a considerable degree a Study Circle democracy." So strong is the commitment to the concept of the Study Circle that, when a new party takes over the government, the public subsidy for Study Circles is left untouched.

The road toward building a Learning Society is slow and difficult to follow. Dreams do not become realities instantaneously. Building a Learning Society is a never–ending process. However, there are many factors that favor its building. For example, in the United States ...

> There is a national trend toward increased participation of citizens in political decision making.
>
> There is an emerging new populism; the idea that power should be returned to the people.

With all the criticism to which American education is exposed, I cannot forget the many, many creative and dedicated teachers I have worked with in the public schools. They are committed to closing the gap between frontier thinking and the curriculum. The same applies to many school principals who work beyond the call of duty to establish an environment in which students can be exposed to knowledge. They can make a great contribution to the Learning Society.

But building a Learning Society must meet many challenges:

Communities are made up of numerous subcultural groups that have their own ideas of what knowledge is and how to use it. Communities have many people who willingly or unwillingly underutilize knowledge and overutilize ignorance.

Fear of dialogue among people with conflicting ideas inhibits the building of a Learning Society. Many people are afraid of new ideas because they are afraid of dislocations, rocking the boat, or waking sleeping dogs.

Let us assume that we who dream about a Learning Society can overcome these difficulties. Will such a Learning Society lead us into the dawn and the sunshine? There is no guarantee. But such a Society does not just drift into chaos and destruction. Such a society has had the energy to make a decision to use its intelligence for human betterment.

APPENDIX

CHART 1

THE FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

by

Lawrence Seneca

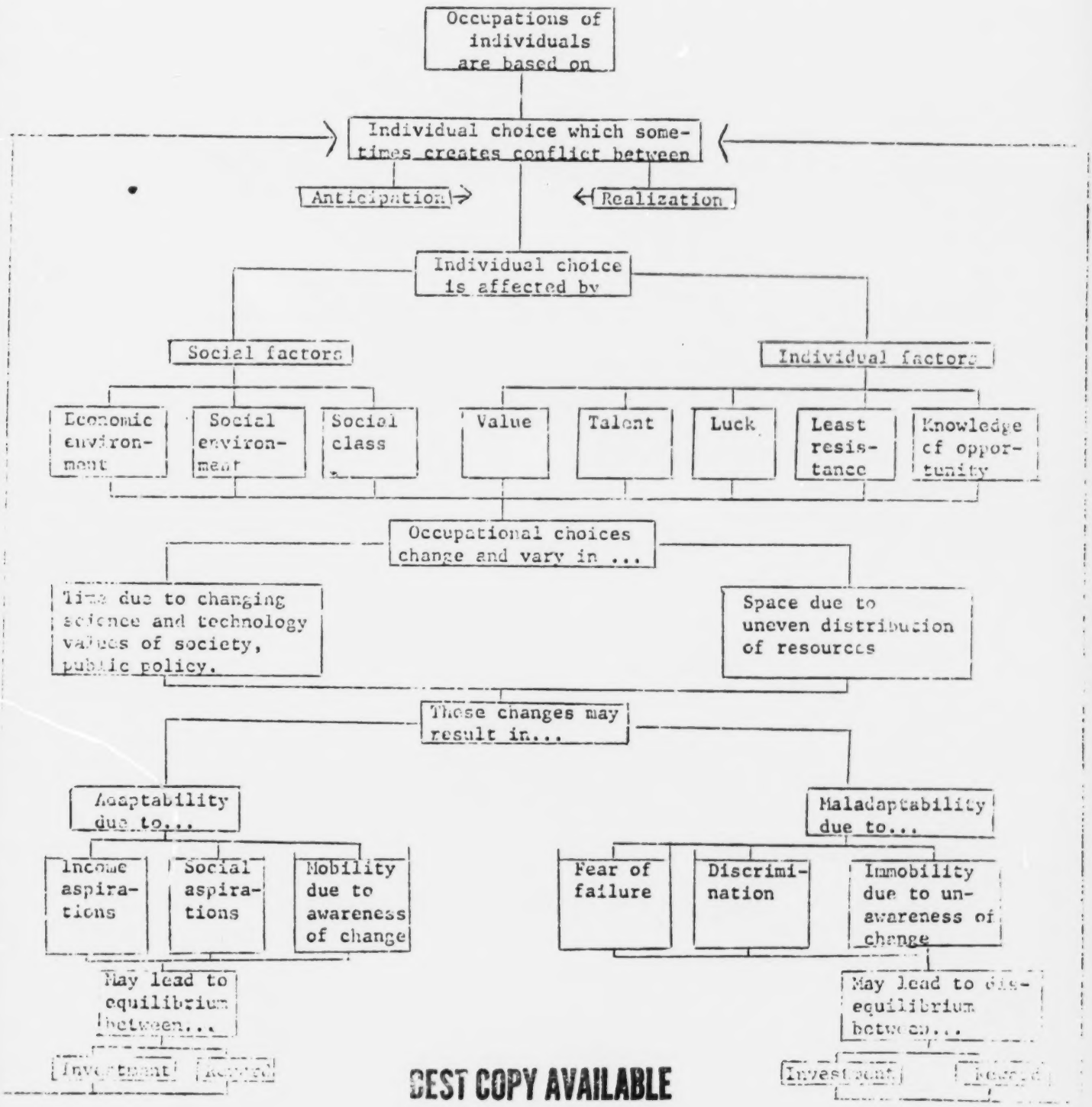

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CHART 2

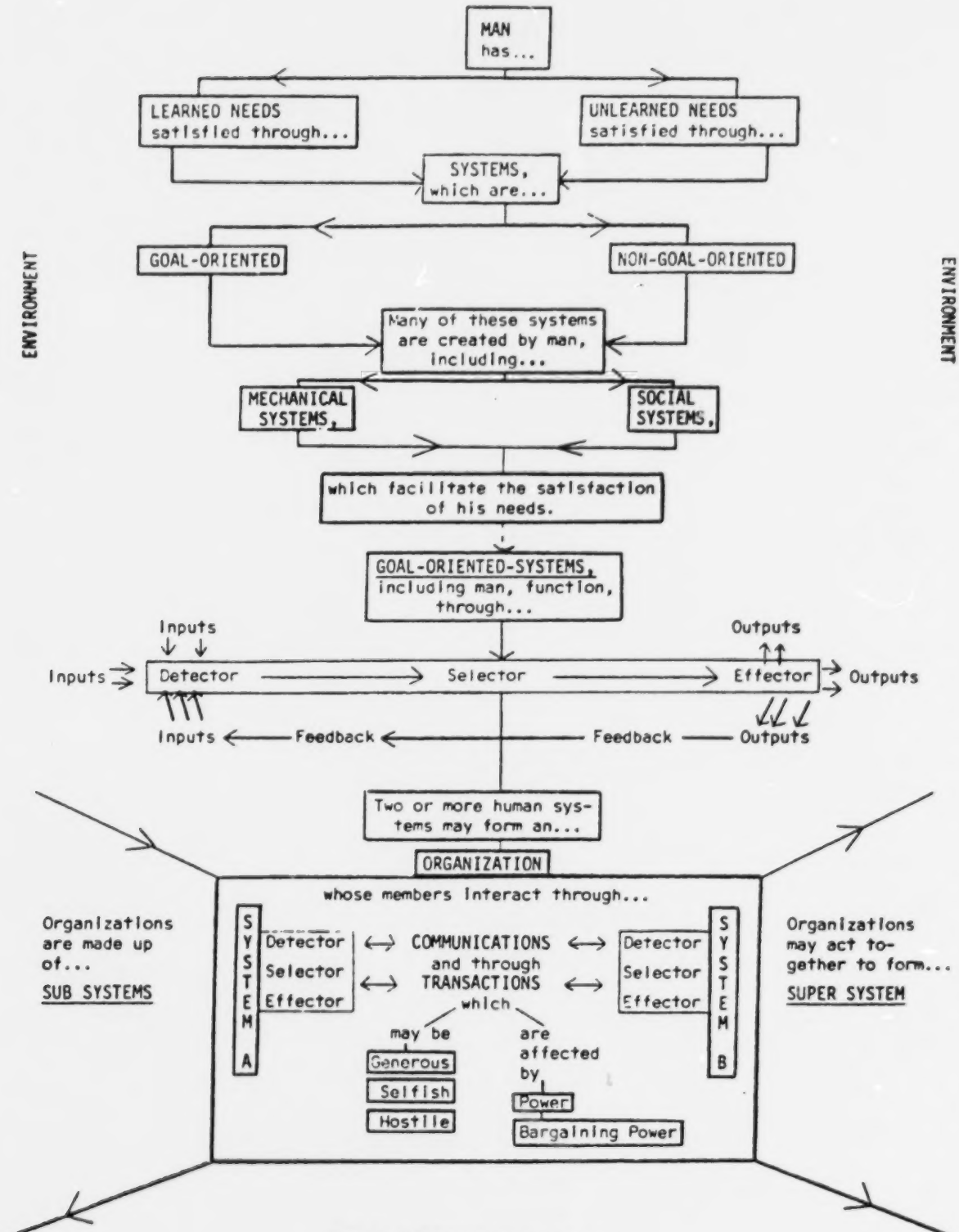

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CHART 3

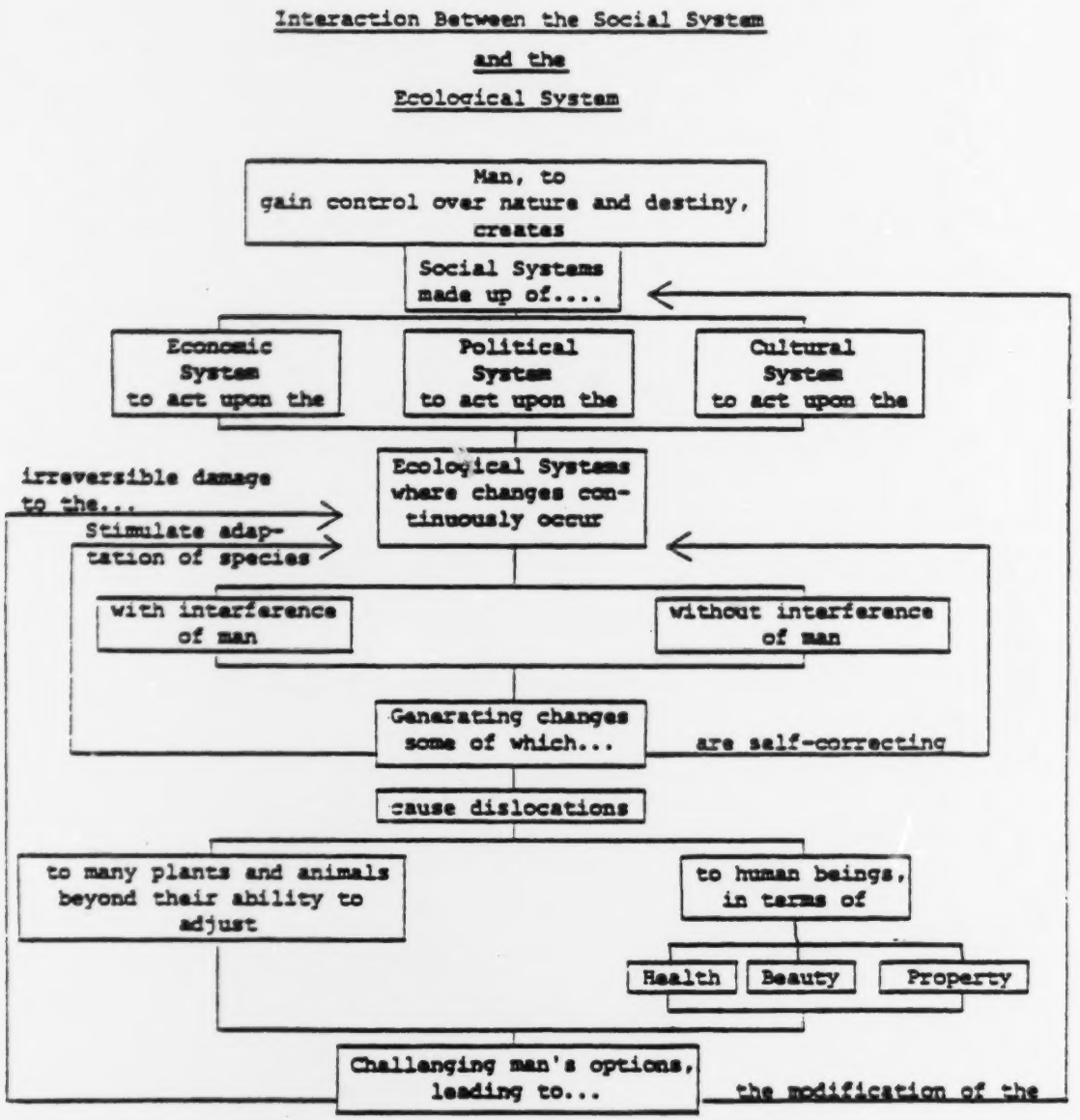

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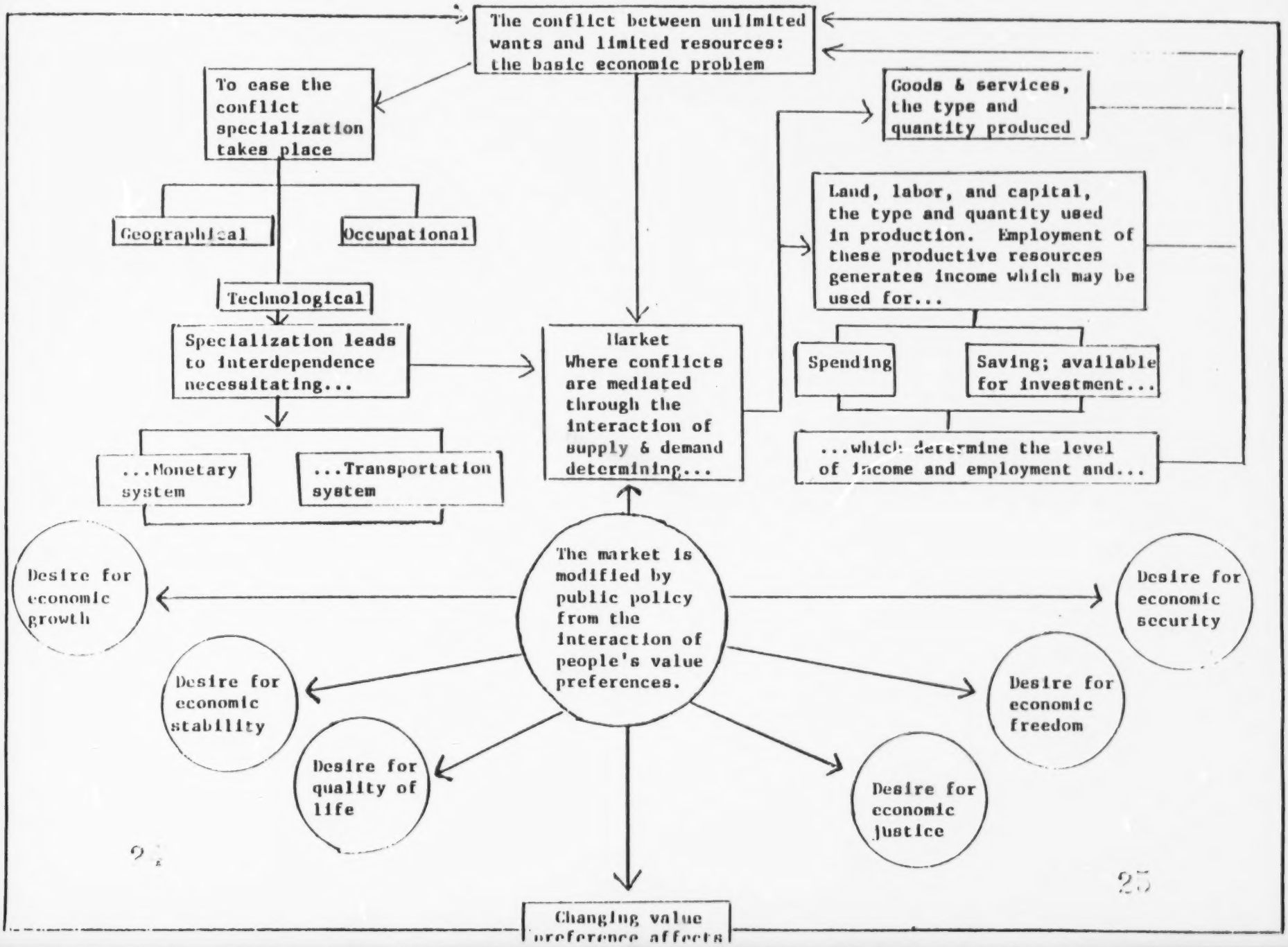
CHART 4

CHART 1: FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS OF ECONOMICS


The conflict between unlimited wants and limited resources: the basic economic problem
To ease the conflict specialization takes place
Geographical
Occupational
Technological
Specialization leads to interdependence necessitating...
...Monetary system
...Transportation system
Market
Where conflicts are mediated through the interaction of supply & demand determining...
Goods & services, the type and quantity produced
Land, labor, and capital, the type and quantity used in production. Employment of these productive resources generates income which may be used for...
Spending
Saving; available for investment...
...which determine the level of income and employment and...
The market is modified by public policy from the interaction of people's value preferences.
Desire for economic growth
Desire for economic security
Desire for economic stability
Desire for economic freedom
Desire for quality of life
Desire for economic justice
Changing value preference affects

CHARTS

CHART 2: FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

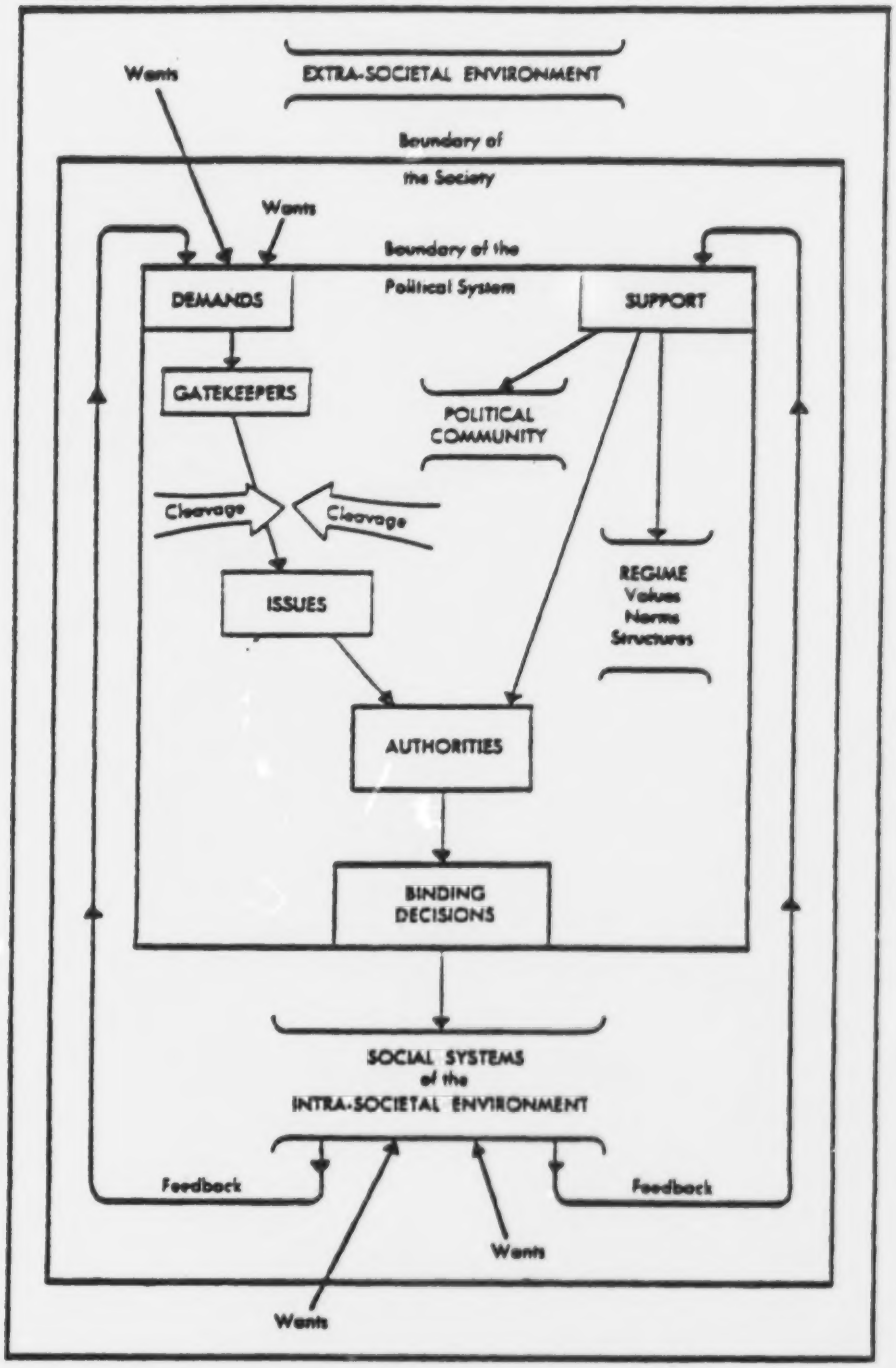


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CHART 3: FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS OF SOCIOLOGY

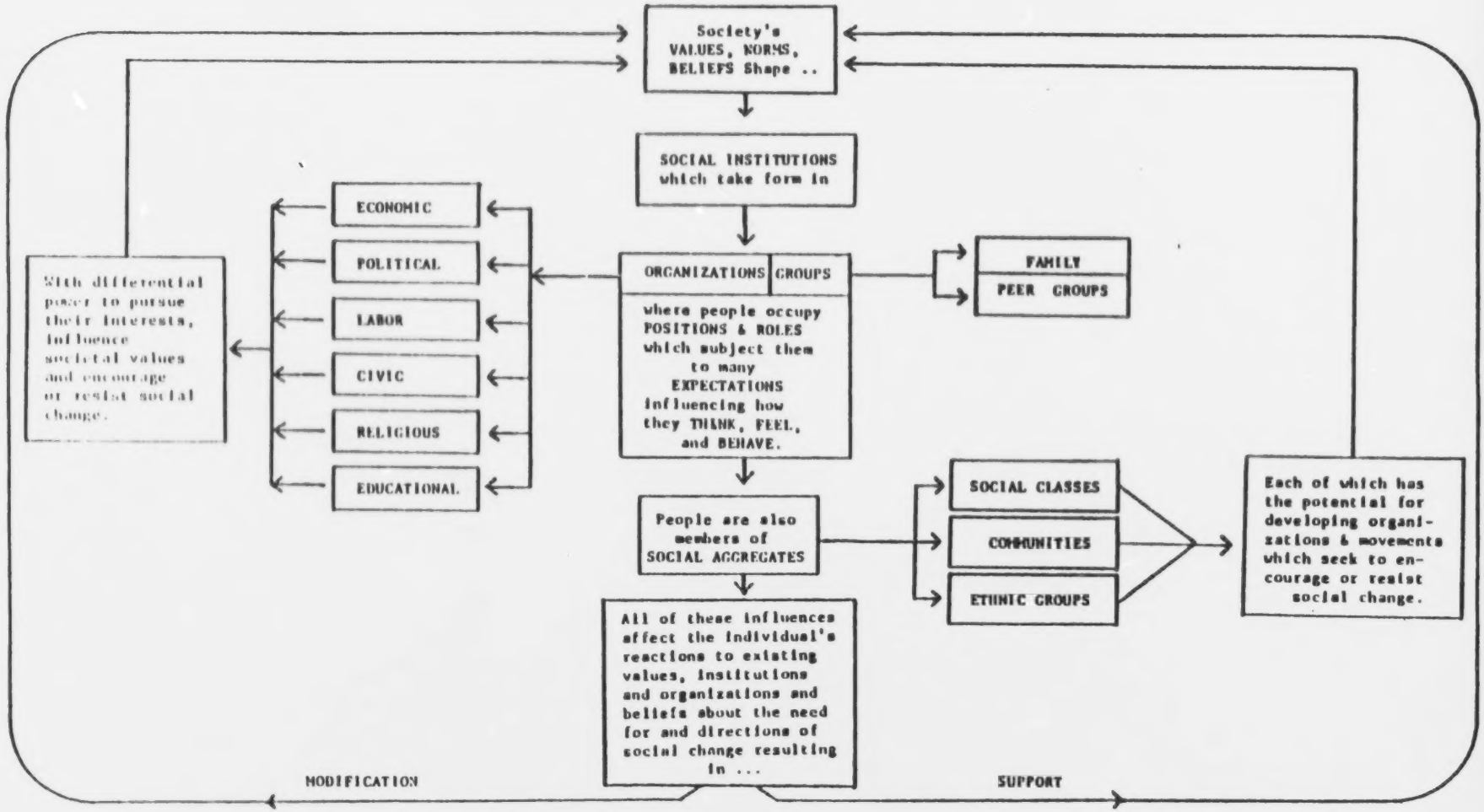
Society's VALUES, NORMS, BELIEFS Shape ..
SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS which take form in
ECONOMIC
POLITICAL
LABOR
CIVIC
RELIGIOUS
EDUCATIONAL
With differential power to pursue their interests, influence societal values and encourage or resist social change.
ORGANIZATIONS
GROUPS
where people occupy POSITIONS & ROLES which subject them to many EXPECTATIONS influencing how they THINK, FEEL, and BEHAVE.
FAMILY
PEER GROUPS
People are also members of SOCIAL AGGREGATES
SOCIAL CLASSES
COMMUNITIES
ETHNIC GROUPS
Each of which has the potential for developing organizations & movements which seek to encourage or resist social change.
All of these influences affect the individual's reactions to existing values, institutions and organizations and beliefs about the need for and directions of social change resulting in ...
MODIFICATION
SUPPORT

CHART 3

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CHART 4: FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS OF CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY

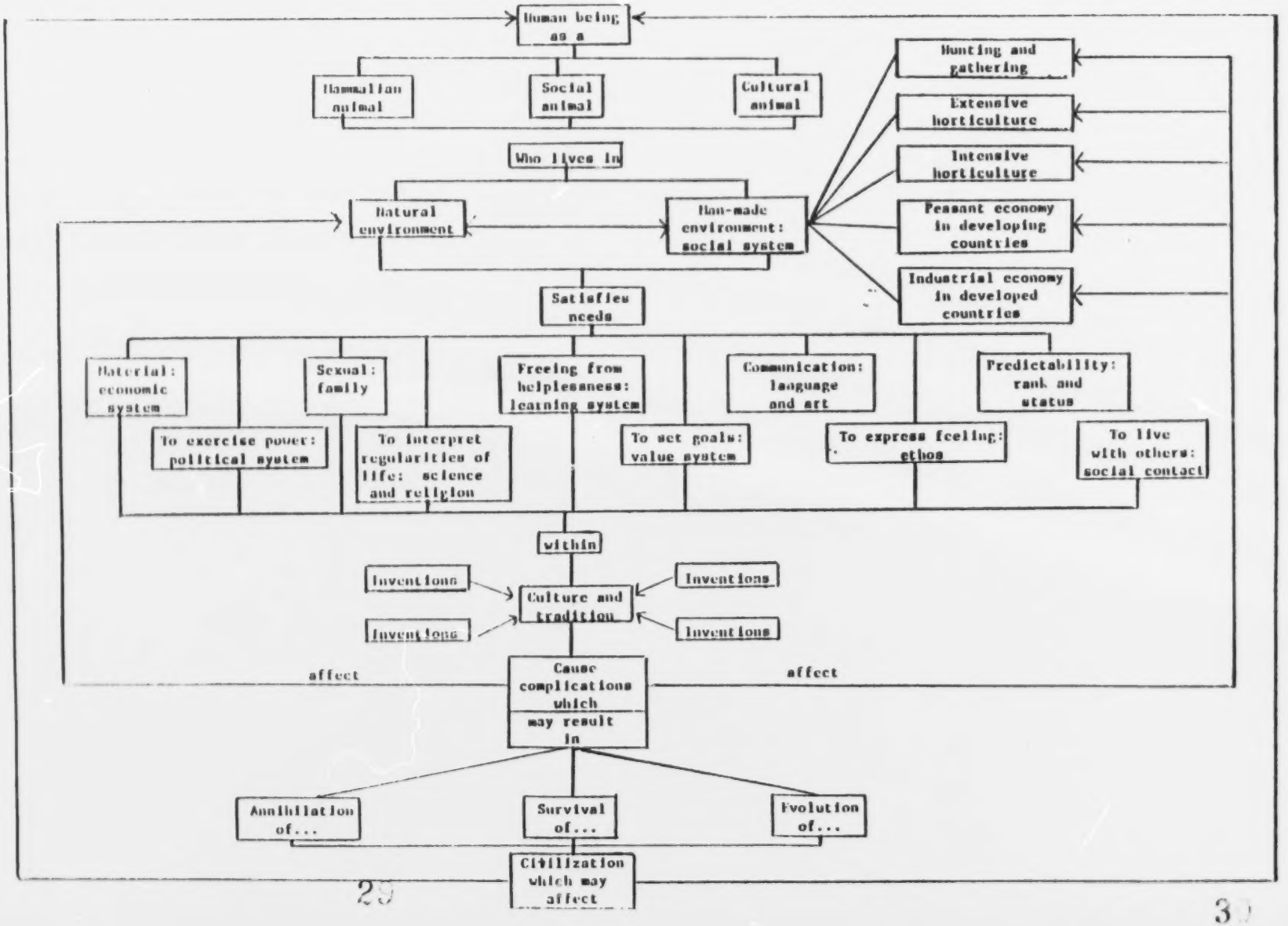

CHART 7

CHART 5: FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

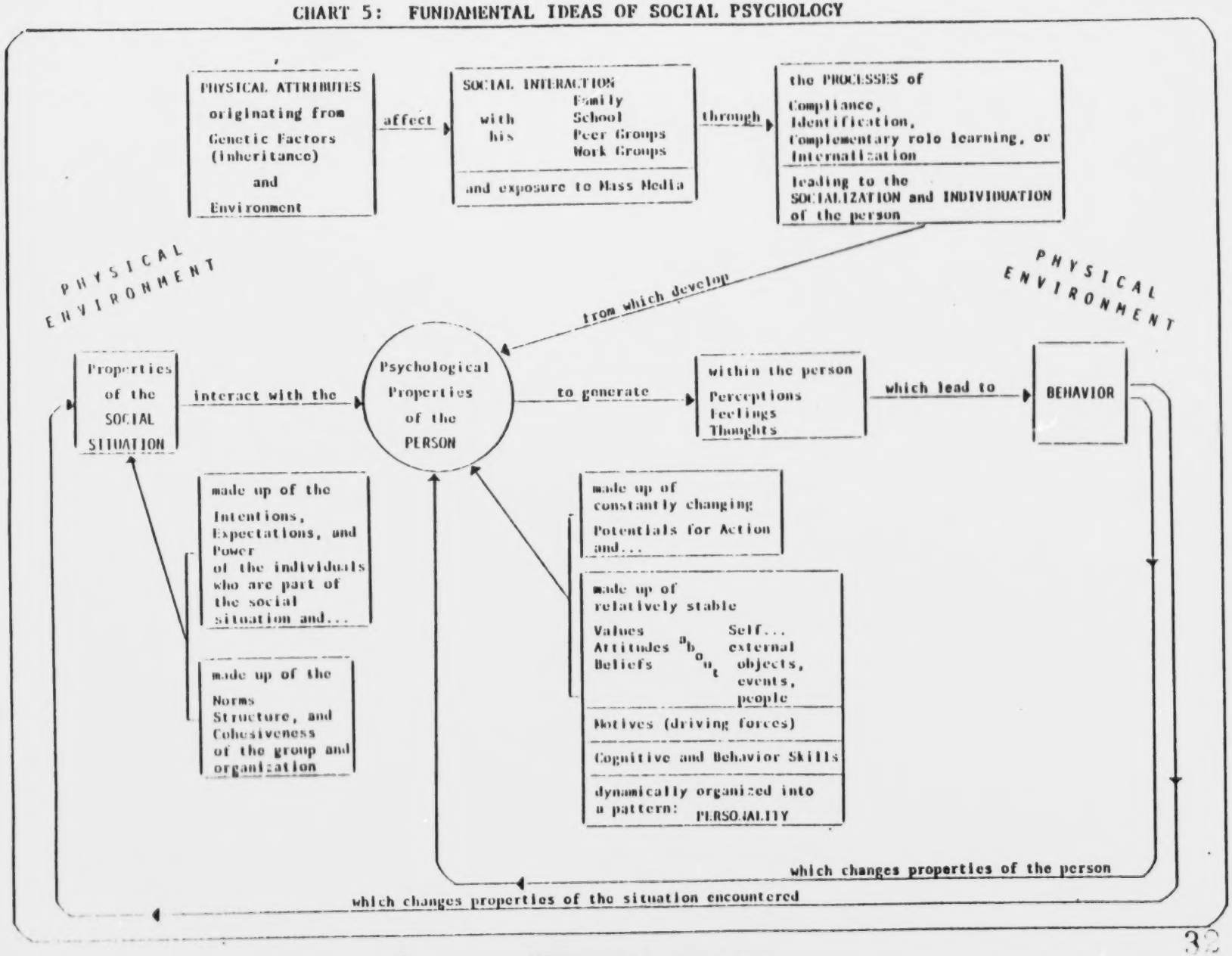
PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES originating from Genetic Factors (inheritance) and Environment
affect
SOCIAL INTERACTION with his Family School Peer Groups Work Groups
and exposure to Mass Media
through
the PROCESSES of Compliance, Identification, Complementary role learning, or Internalization
leading to the SOCIALIZATION and INDIVIDUATION of the person
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
from which develop
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT
Properties of the SOCIAL SITUATION
interact with the
Psychological Properties of the PERSON
to generate
within the person Perceptions Feelings Thoughts
which lead to
BEHAVIOR
made up of the Intentions, Expectations, and Power of the individuals who are part of the social situation and...
made up of the Norms Structure, and Cohesiveness of the group and organization
made up of constantly changing Potentials for Action and...
made up of relatively stable Values Attitudes Beliefs about Self... external objects, events, people
Motives (driving forces)
Cognitive and Behavior Skills
dynamically organized into a pattern: PERSONALITY
which changes properties of the person
which changes properties of the situation encountered

CHART 8

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CHART 6: FUNDAMENTAL IDEAS OF THE SEARCH FOR JUSTICE

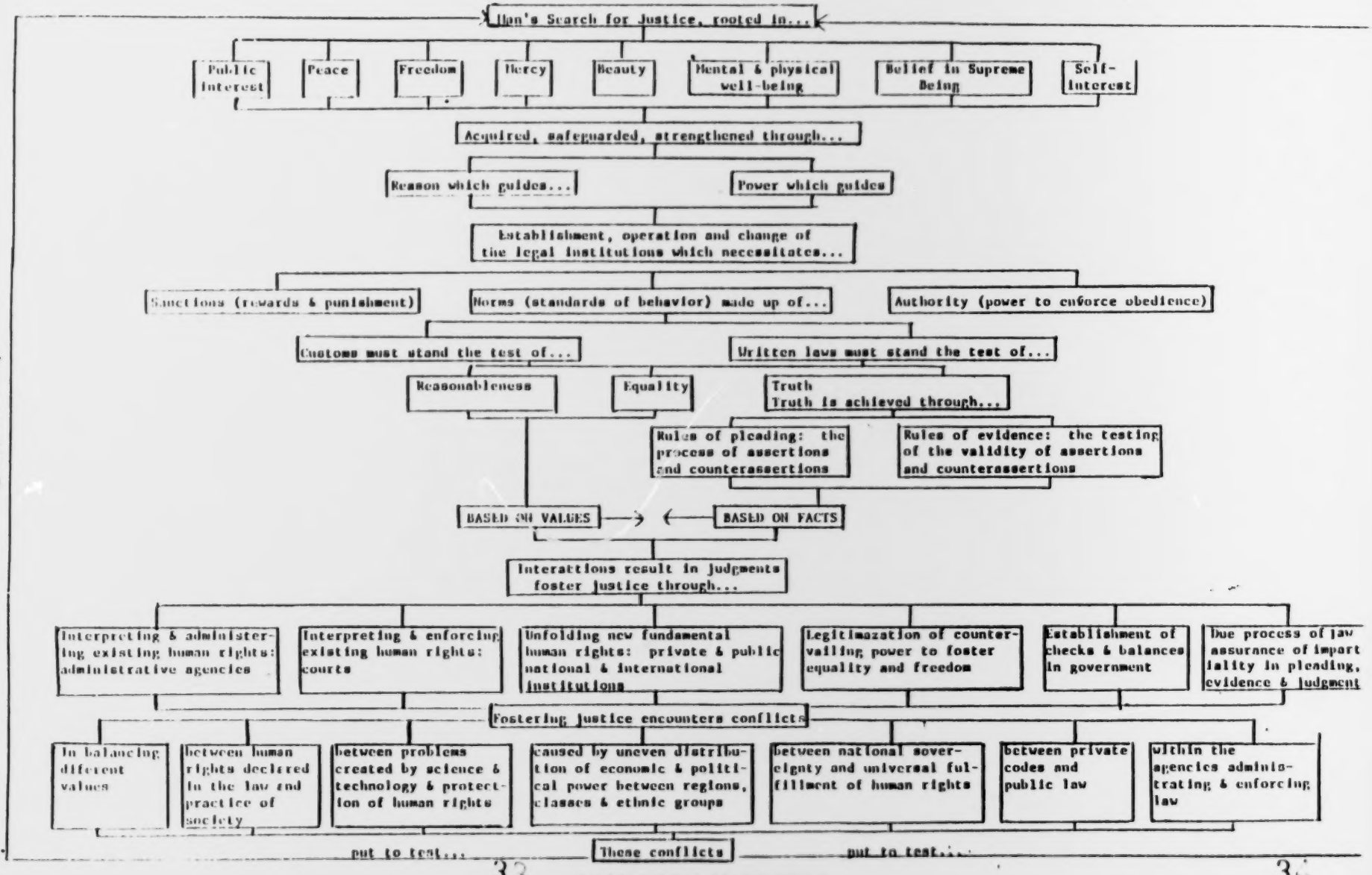
Man's Search for Justice, rooted in...
Public interest
Peace
Freedom
Mercy
Beauty
Mental & physical well-being
Belief in Supreme Being
Self-interest
Acquired, safeguarded, strengthened through...
Reason which guides...
Power which guides
Establishment, operation and change of the legal institutions which necessitates...
Sanctions (rewards & punishment)
Norms (standards of behavior) made up of...
Authority (power to enforce obedience)
Customs must stand the test of...
Written laws must stand the test of...
Reasonableness
Equality
Truth
Truth is achieved through...
Rules of pleading: the process of assertions and counterassertions
Rules of evidence: the testing of the validity of assertions and counterassertions
BASED ON VALUES
BASED ON FACTS
Interattions result in judgments foster justice through...
Interpreting & administering existing human rights: administrative agencies
Interpreting & enforcing existing human rights: courts
Unfolding new fundamental human rights: private & public national & international institutions
Legitimazation of countervailing power to foster equality and freedom
Establishment of checks & balances in government
Due process of law assurance of impartiality in pleading, evidence & judgment
Fostering justice encounters conflicts
In balancing different values
between human rights declared in the law and practice of society
between problems created by science & technology & protection of human rights
caused by uneven distribution of economic & political power between regions, classes & ethnic groups
between national sovereignty and universal fulfillment of human rights
between private codes and public law
within the agencies administrating & enforcing law
put to test...
These conflicts
put to test...

CHART 6

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THE LEARNING SOCIETY AS A CYBERNETIC LEARNING SYSTEM

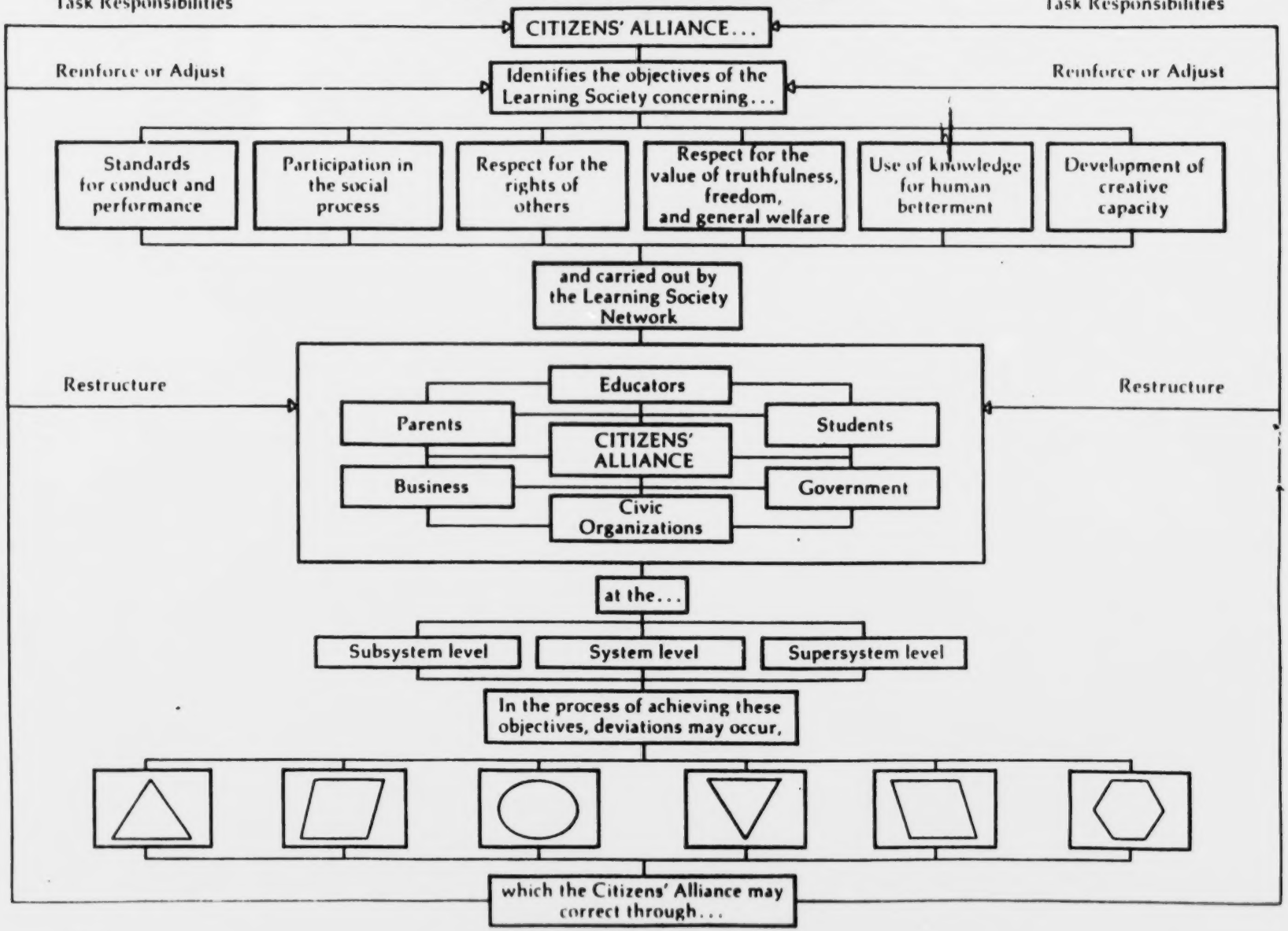

CHART 10

ATTACHMENT A